

LET'S EXPLORE

IT would take an intense student of New Jersey to say right off where Dock Watch Hollow, Millington Gorge, Dead River and Round Top can be found. Mt. Horeb, Stone House or Union Village might be a bit easier to locate although none ranks among the state's best-known spots. Hence, it's almost certain that in visiting these places today the motorist will be seeing some new scenes on a special holiday jaunt through that section where Somerset, Union and Morris counties cluster around the Passaic River. The area is familiar—it embraces the Watchung Mountains and Long Hill—but the back roads taken will be generally new to motorists. A pleasant ride is assured although it will be left to the visitor to see if he agrees with an early author that this is "the greenest place in New Jersey."

A GOOD start is to turn left off Route 24 in River road just west of Canoe Brook Country Club near Summit. Keep right at the CIBA plant, take the next left on Passaic avenue to a junction with Springfield avenue in West Summit then turn right for New Providence and Berkeley Heights.

Drive left at the Berkeley Heights traffic light and keep right a few feet after crossing the railroad tracks. A right turn at the next intersection leads to the crossroad at Union Village, whose quiet rural aspect often attracts artists. At the corner two roads come in like a "V" and today's route takes the second road, diagonally left past the attractive little Union Village Methodist Church with a history dating back to 1832.

Now the way is open through surprisingly extensive farm country, dominated by some good-sized dairies. Pleasant meadows dotted with grazing cattle extend beyond split-rail fences. At the first "STOP" street look for a little old stone house to the right. Long ago this was one of Warren Township's school-houses; now it's an attractive cottage. The huge stump near the house is all that's left of the once well-known towering elm stricken in the 1948 ice storm.

THE second "STOP" sign beyond is the signal for a left turn to Mt. Bethel, where a right turn is made to continue the trip. First, however, Mt. Bethel corner invites a stop. The old Baptist Church is peaceful beneath a huge buttonwood tree while across the street is an old hotel. The church dates back to 1767 and has been in its present location since 1785. Inside the square plain church the small pew section beneath a sparkling white balcony lends

'Greenest Place In New Jersey'

BY JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM

Old Bound Brook reservoir was literally formed out of rock. Three sides are of natural rock and the dam was made of concrete. Located between Martinsville and first Watchung range, pond is fed by Raritan River branch.

emphasis to the sign of welcome in front of the church. Outside a far-off view of the valley to the north can be seen beyond the old cemetery.

The first road right beyond Mt. Bethel leads to a side jaunt down to Dead River past an abandoned and crumbling brick-making plant, one of many such brick yards formerly spotted near the Passaic River valley to take advantage of the heavy clay found in abundance. Dead River scarcely moves as it makes its way through swampy surroundings to a

junction with the Passaic. It's easy to turn around north of the river to return to the main trip over Round Top, reached via a gravel road to the left a tenth of a mile west of Dead River road.

Round Top rises 300 feet and then falls as suddenly away down the other side as the road becomes hard-surfaced for the descent to unique Dock Watch Hollow. The "Hollow" is an eye-filling treat, even if the derivation of its name proves less intriguing than might be expected. An authentic source

says "Dock Watch" is probably the corruption of the last name of William Dockwra, an early landowner.

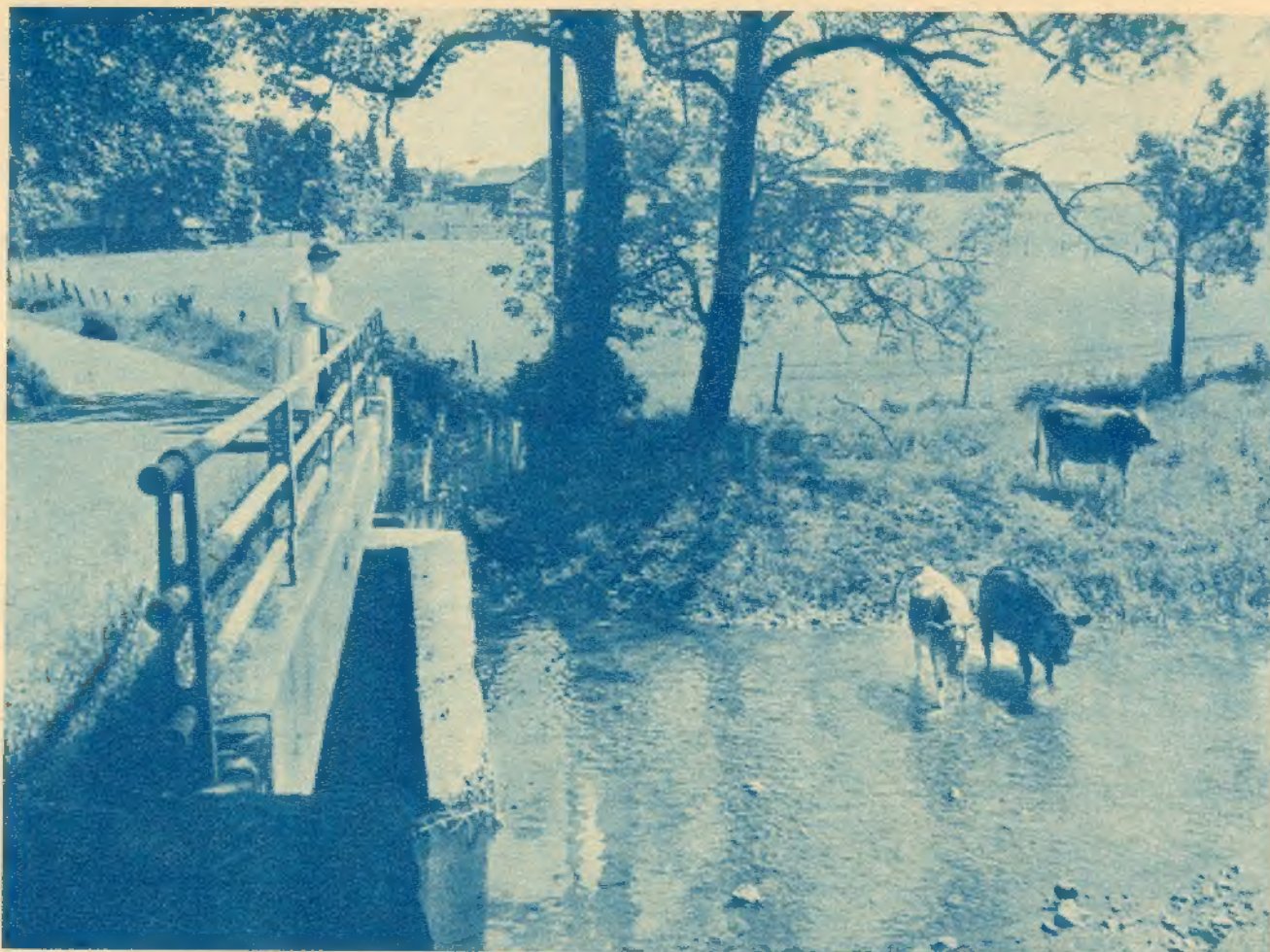
THE "Hollow" is something worth viewing. A little stream pounding down through boulders is the first indication of how precipitously the mountain drops into the hollow. To the east (left) a tree-covered cliff is visible proof that the mountain has been hacked down almost 250 feet, possibly by a large stream of long ago. The rock ledges by the road are

interesting, since they are among the few of true basaltic character found in the state. That means that instead of being stratified horizontally in the usual manner the ledges are in vertical prismatic columns, which split away from the main body in long slivers.

Beyond Dock Watch turn right at the "T" intersection then take the next left down the long pleasant valley to see Chimney Rock. A great deal of red shale underlies the ground in these slopes and the 19th Century writer who called this "the greenest place in New Jersey" ascribed the obvious lushness of the region to the shale. Route 29 is touched very briefly at the foot of the mountain but by turning right with the traffic then turning right at the traffic light a few hundred feet beyond the garish highway is left quickly behind.

CHIMNEY ROCK is high up on the right, a light-colored stone balanced on a rocky cliff. Naturally there is a legend that an Indian maiden leaped from the rock to join a lover who had been killed in battle. Conveniently enough that happened in the year 1200, when warring tribes "died the waters red with savage battle."

An immense quarry to the left highlights the fact that the Watchungs are rich in trap rock. This is one of the state's biggest quarries and the diggings are so deep that the varied-colored sides of the rock pits are reminiscent of the backgrounds in cowboy movies. Early histories tell



Cattle find coolness in small stream on road down mountain to Chimney Rock. Area was once called "the greenest place in New Jersey" by an early author.

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Typical of rural New Jersey churches is this simple Presbyterian edifice in New Providence.

how this region was mined for copper more than 100 years ago and then became a favored recreation spot before the quarry was started. North of the quarry the road passes both the old and the new Bound Brook reservoirs and swings upward to Washington Valley road again. A left turn followed by taking the next right leads up over Mt. Horeb for a magnificent panoramic view of the valley in the direction of Liberty Corner.

At the crossroad at the foot of the hill before Liberty Corner is reached, keep right past the Lyons Veterans Hospital to Stone House, named for the square ivy-covered old stone building on the corner to the right. Honeysuckle growing profusely along the road almost hides the historic 188-year-old house. Turn left

at Stone House corner then take the next right for Millington Gorge, a beauty spot which probably was better known 75 years ago than it is today.

A DIRT and gravel road to the left leads up through the gorge on the west side of the Passaic River about two-thirds of a mile after the turns at Stone House. Soon the trees become so thick that the illusion of twilight is felt. As the road rises the gorge to the right deepens until it is best seen where the Lackawanna Railroad tracks cross on a 150-foot bridge. The Passaic eddying slowly below gives no indication of the force needed countless centuries ago to carve this bed through Long Hill.

Past the railroad bridge
(Continued on Following Page)



Arthur Compton, 72-year-old smithy, shows group of children iron work done in his shop. Forge, located near Millington, opened in 1866.

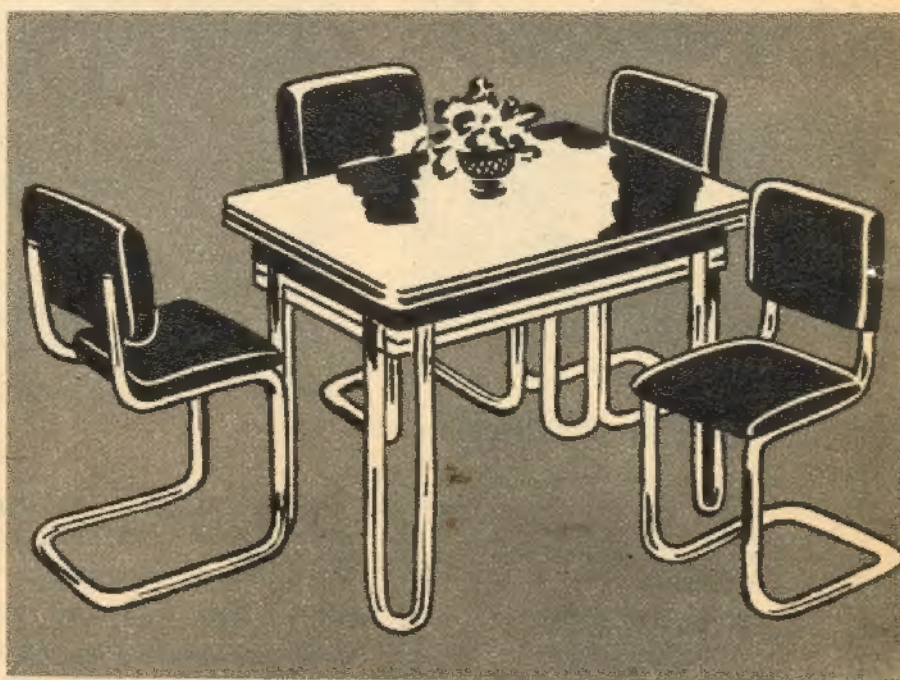
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**Let's Explore—
'Greenest
Place in
New Jersey'**

(Cont'd from Preceding Page)
keep right across the river for the climb up Long Hill. The road levels off and as it curves around to the east an old blacksmith shop on the left is interesting. The shop, with a multitude of iron work clinging to its front, has functioned since 1866. The present smithy is 72-year-old Arthur Compton, son of the founder.

Long Hill's park-like ridge is entrancing all the way back to Chatham. Long views make this a favorite spot for lovers of quiet Jersey scenery. The road overlooks Stirling, then touches a crossroad near Meyersville. By keeping left the motorist will swing down into Meyersville then up again to Fairmount avenue in Chatham. Straight ahead the road stays high above the valley then slowly drops to follow the river back to Chatham or Summit. Either way is attractive, made doubly so because formerly bad stretches on both roads have been put in excellent condition this Summer.



Railroad bridge over Millington Gorge offers excellent opportunity to see a 150-foot ravine.



Communities of Lyons and Liberty Corner form a backdrop for these girls studying the old grave markers in the Mt. Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery.

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